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764 Thereupon they put a winnowing-fan over the middle of the place where he was burnt; treading on this the men who carried him dig round it, and the one who was the last one to dig hacks the winnowing-fan and leaves it. Then one man mixes cowdung water in a brass-cup and sprinkles it on the places there up to where they had put him. Thereupon they scatter the remaining roasted cotton-seed and paddy over the place where he was cremated. And they say to it: Have a care then, so long a while the earth was closed up, now we are purifying thee. Thereupon some three men bury the small earthenware vessel containing the flower-bones in a copse at the end of the village street. In this place they cover with earth the earthenware vessel, over which they have put bark pressed down with a stone. Thereupon they all go to bathe. When they have bathed, they come to the end of the village street and stand there. They have some Sal-resin that they have taken off (some tree) when they came. One man asks for fire and brings it out from the village. Into this fire they throw the resin, and all of them are fumigated by this resin. Thereupon they go to their respective houses. All that was sent with the dead person they sell and buy a castrated goat (or pig), and the village people eat this the same day. But the people of the house where the death occurred, do not eat of it.

When it becomes evening, elderly men go to the house of death to console the inhabitants of this house. They say to them: Do not be constantly grieving; he is gone, he is happy; we shall also one day in the future have to go. If we should be continually crying, our body would suffer, our work would also be neglected; the landlords are there, the usurers and money-lenders are there, the relatives are there, our own stomach and soul are there; so long as we are alive, we shall surely not give up eating and drinking; therefore work, do what is to be done. Then from to-day keep your soul down with a stone-rock. People tell, they say: If you cry all day long, they will rap him who is gone on the head, like a buffalo-calf. In the other world they will say to him: Please you, dance, they are singing for you. Therefore do not wail and lament all over the country, or they will give him much hardship.

c. The ceremony of purification after death.

765 On the fifth day they have the purification ceremony[1]. They assemble in the house of the dead person and are shaved. The people of the house pound flattened rice, and they make three cakes, boiling them in oil. Now the people of the village go to bathe. They take a little soapy earth for washing the hair, oil-cake, oil, three tooth-brush twigs, and three or four leaves with them to the place where they are to bathe. The women go to a separate place. The men divide the earth and the oil-cake that they have brought to the bathing place on three leaves, and the tooth-brush twigs they also put down along

[1] The Santal words tel asnan literally mean "oil bathing" and are taken from Hindi.

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with these. Thereupon they offer this earth with the left hand to the bongas. They make an invocation: Here then, thou who hast died, hast fallen, to-day we are bathing, we are washing our hair for the sake of purification, mayest thou also bathe, wash thy hair. After this they make offering to the first human pair; they make this invocation: Here then, Pilcu haram, for the sake of purification we are bathing, are washing our hair, may you two also bathe and wash your hair; now then this one who has died, has fallen here, him also you two bring in and keep, lead in and keep with you; under the eaves of a stranger, at the back of a stranger's house do not put him, you two. At last they offer to Marak buru; they make an invocation: Here then, Marak buru, for the sake of purification we are bathing, washing our hair; mayest thou also bathe, wash thy hair; have a care then, also this one who has been extinguished, has fallen down, bring him in and keep him, lead him in and keep him with thee. 765 ●

When they have bathed, they return home. The women also come. The widow of the dead man comes in wet clothes, and she wrings the water out of her cloth at the place where her husband died. When the village people have had food, they again assemble in the house of the dead one. Then they call on the dead one to come. Three persons become possessed, one by the dead one, one by Poredhol[4] and one by Marak buru. When the possessed ones have been inspired, the village people ask them: Please, Lords, who are you who have stretched yourselves out like a straw-rope? Only when you tell, when you show your kind, your birth, then only we shall know, shall recognize, that you are this bonga, this mountain-spirit; then only we shall worship him, pay homage to him. Two of them say it is right, and they tell who they are, viz., I am Poredhol, and I am Marak buru. One of them does not speak. They then sprinkle water on him, and washing his face they slap him on his back. Then he says it is right. Then they ask him: Please, Lord, who art thou who hast come, hast arrived; tell thy kind, thy birth. He then says: I the extinguished one, the fallen-down one have come, have arrived. They then give rice to the three bongas and say to them: Here please, Lords, broken grains, rice grains, understand ye, explain ye first; it has no eyes, no ears. Then they seek to understand among themselves. When they have understood, they put the rice back into the winnowing-fan. They then ask them: Please, Lords, how did ye understand, did ye explain, tell us, show us, how did we die, did we fall? They then say: One day, half-a-day what was ill, what was diseased was accepted, was pricked. Now they ask the dead one: Please, Lord, thou the extinguished one, the fallen down one, how didst thou go, didst thou get up? He then says: I got finished of my own accord; or, if witches have eaten him, he will say: There was no room for me in the eyes of people, therefore I went. 765 787

Now they say to him: Wilt thou not ask for water? He answers: I shall ask for it. He then asks every one of the village people for water, commencing with the people of

[4] Poredhol, lit. the whitish-red one, is used here about the spirit of the first man.

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765 787 his own family. All give him water. After this they give him beer, a couple of brass-cups, until he is satisfied. Marak buru and Porodhol they also give each one leaf-cup with water and beer. Thereupon they ask the dead one: Please, as thou knowest, we are going to take thee to the Damuda river, may nowhere on the road, in the forest stomach-ache, headache be created, be formed. He then says: Do it, youngsters, nothing will happen, like the wind you will go, like the wind you will come back. When they have had this talk, they make them come to.

765 Thereupon they wrap up one seer of flattened rice, three cakes, and one seer rice. They stitch together a purse of the cloth of the dead one; taking this with them they go to the end of the village street. Women bring water along in brass-cups, besides turmeric. When they have reached the end of the village street, they stand together at the cross road. Now three men go to fetch the flower-bones[1]. They take fire with them. When they have dug it up, they set fire to the burial place and come away. Then they say: The old woman's hut is burning, hey! Now they come straight along, they do not look back. This they call the burning of the old woman's hut. They cut and bring along three ebony sticks, short ones. These three they tie into a bundle, and on top of this they put the small earthenware vessel. They take out the flower-bones and call on the women to come near. With a leaf-cup these (women) pour water on the flower-bones, after this turmeric water, after this milk. The heir of the dead one puts the flower-bones into the purse. Thereupon the people move away some distance. One man among the three who brought the flower-bones takes an ebony stick and goes three times round the small earthenware vessel; then he at once strikes the vessel into pieces with his left hand; thereupon the three men go with the flower-bones half-way, that is, up to past one village boundary. The other people go back to the house of death after having bathed. They drink a couple leaf-cups of beer.

It becomes evening. They catch and bring a few fish. When they have brought these, they cook them and a fowl into curry and rice without salt. When they cut up the fowl, they cut off and keep one leg and one wing. This leg and wing they tie to a small piece of wood, and when it has become dark, three men go to the cross-road at the end of the village street; they take with them two or three other small pieces of wood, a little thatching-grass from the eaves, and fire, and one man among them drags the leg and wing that is tied to the piece of wood along the ground. When they have reached the cross-road, they build a semblance of a house, thatch it with the thatching-grass, and when they have thrown the fowl's leg and the wing into this house, they set fire to the hut and come away. They say: The old woman's hut is burning, hey! Thereupon they come straight back to

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[1] Lit. jaā baha, bone flower, the three bits of bone that are to be taken to the Damuda river. No Santal has been able to explain why these bones are called "flower", some think, that it may possibly be due to the bones being white.

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the house. When they reach the entrance to the courtyard of the dead person, they see that they have in the meantime placed water in a wooden mortar. Into this they dip their left foot and go inside to the courtyard. When the last one of them has dipped his foot into the wooden mortar, he kicks and upsets it.

Now all the people who have come to take food sit down. Two persons of the family take food from karam leaves, and the village people from half-finished Sal-leaf-plates. One leaf-cup with rice, one leaf-cup with curry, and one leaf-cup with water placed in a small basket they hang up in a carrying-sling at the place where the death took place. The people of the family make a pretence of eating with their left hand; at this time the village people sprinkle water on them with roots of the khus khus[6] plant, to remove their uncleanness. The food they have eaten they call food after cremation.

The three men who have gone half-way to take the flower-bones away eat the flattened rice and the cakes that they have brought with them inside the boundary of another village; thereupon they return to the house with the flower-bones. In the house they put bedsteads and wooden slabs to sit on before them; they pour out water to them; they salute them. Thereupon they go inside the house; they put the flower-bones into a new vessel and hang this up and keep it in a safe place. Thereupon they give them food. After this the village people go to their respective homes. When day dawns, they take down the carrying sling in which they had put the leaf-cup with rice, and look at it, whether he has eaten it, or it is there. If he has eaten it, they find a crumb in the leaf-cup with water, and if he has not eaten, there is nothing. Now they put these things and the leaf-plates on which they took food in the evening, into a broken basket and throw it away at the cross-road at the end of the village street, the basket included.

d. Going to the Damuda river.

There is no fixed time for going to the Damuda river. Santals who live near the Damuda river set the flower-bones afloat the same day they cremate a person. Some take flower-bones to the Damuda one month afterwards, and others five months afterwards, and people who live in a distant country only after two or three years. They go there mostly in the month of Aghān (middle of November to middle of December). They provide the necessary food for the journey; they also collect the necessary things: A cloth three cubits long, five cowries, one wristlet, a little sindur, one seer flattened rice, three cakes, and one seer rice. As they fear the dangers of the forests and thieves, people of only one village do not go to take the flower-bones away. People of two or three villages, where people have died, invite each other to go in company, and then they go, each taking their separate

[6] Andropogon muricatus, Retz.

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• 765 flower-bones along. The ears of the sacrificial animal that they are to give to the dead one at the final funeral ceremonies, they cut off and let the blood drip down on the rice, and this rice they put in with the flower-bones.

Our first place of descent at the Damuda is Gai ghat (cow descent place), next Tirio ghat (flute descent place), after this Telkupi barni ghat; after this still further down they have arranged a place of descent, this they call Hatkunda banda ghat; the last places of descent are Haḍa bhanga and Domalia. Some people take the flower-bones to Gua river[7], viz., members of the Hembrom sept.

When the men who go to the Damuda river reach there, they first buy right to descent with the cowries, that is to say, they put them down at the place of descent, and they make three marks of sindur at the place of descent; the wristlet they also put down there. Thereupon they go down to the river. First they make a small pool in the sand. When they have done this, they put on a loin-strip of new cloth, and the heir of the dead one takes the flower-bones in his hand; when he has done this, he goes down into the water of a deep pool, and turning towards the sun-rise he dives and at once lets the bones float away together with the bloody rice. When he has been bathed, he comes back to the small pool. Now he puts on other clothes. The stripped-off clothes the Doms of the place there take, and also the cowries and the wristlet.

Thereupon the heir offers earth. First he puts portions of earth on three leaves, and three tooth-brush twigs, that he has broken off on the road and brought along, these also he offers on the leaves. Thereupon he makes an invocation: Be greeted then, thou who hast been extinguished, hast fallen down, here I am performing the last rites for thee, I have bathed and washed my hair, mayest thou also bathe and wash thy hair. After this he offers earth to Pilcu haram and Pilcu budhi; he makes invocation: Here then, Pilcu haram, Pilcu budhi, I have bathed and washed my hair; may you two also bathe and wash your hair. For the extinguished one, the fallen-down one I have performed the last rites; now you two bring him in and keep him, lead him in and keep him with you from to-day. After this he offers to Porodhoi and makes invocation: Here then, Porodhoi, I have bathed and washed my hair, mayest thou also bathe and wash thy hair; now as is seen here, I have performed the last rites for the extinguished one, the fallen-down one, bring him in and keep him, lead him in an keep him with you.

After this he puts small heaps of flattened rice on three leaves, and on every leaf he puts one cake. Thereupon he worships, making the same kind of invocation. Then he himself and those of his own village who have come with him, eat this flattened rice and the cakes. The other people also eat in the same way. The wrapped-up flattened rice and the rice left over from what has been offered to the bongas, the Doms at this descent to

[823] [7] The Gua river is said to be to the South of the Santal Parganas district. The different ghats mentioned will not be found on any map; they are known to the Santals as places where their ancestors have been.

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the river take. When they start to return home, they call out horibol three times in the Damuda river and come away. When they come home, the people of their home call the village headman and his deputy and give beer to these two and the men returned from the Damuda river. And they ask each other about the state of matters. Thereupon they separate.

e. The final funeral ceremonies.

The bhaṇḍan is our final act in connexion with death. By the final funeral ceremonies we make propitiation in connexion with the dead person. We brew beer, we provide all that is necessary for a feast. On the day appointed the relatives and the village people come together; we are shaved; we bathe and come back; in the evening we call on the dead person, the ancestors, and Marań buru to come; when they have taken possession of some, we ask them: Please, Lords, as ye see here we are to-day giving the extinguished one, the fallen-down one his share and portion; you two, Marań buru and Poredhol, look after what is his (hers), pay attention to what is his (hers). They both say: Well and good. Thereupon we say to the dead one: Have a care then, we are giving thee, handing thee thy share, thy portion to-day; receive it, accept it with pleasure, with delight. He says: Well and good. Thereupon they give them water and beer. They drink; thereupon they make them come to.

In the courtyard they plant a branch of the ṣāl tree; there they plaster with cow-dung, and put a leaf-plate with rice; thereupon they first fell the sacrificial animal whose ears they cut off when they went to the Damuda river. At this time they make an invocation: Here then, thou so and so (the dead one), thy share, thy portion we are giving thee, handing thee; thou wilt receive it, accept it with pleasure, with delight; mayest thou fondle this, consider this great, Father my Ṭhākur. (He has become a bonga, is it not so?) Thereupon all the relatives and the village people, making the same kind of invocation, fell the sacrificial animals that they have brought along (they have also brought beer), in the name of the dead one. They do not give sacrificial animals to other bongas. And they pour out beer as a libation to him. They make an invocation: Have a care then, after that done we are pouring out, baling out shield-water, fight-water to thee; mayest thou be pleased with, agree to this Lord, Father my Ṭhākur. Also to Marań buru and to Poredhol they libate beer, making invocation in the same way.

When they singe and cut up the sacrificed animals, they take off and keep aside one forequarter of the animal they first felled, and the head and the liver and lungs they bring into the house to the owners for sacrificing purposes, and the neck-portion they cut off and keep aside. Now the village people bring out from the house of the owner one earthenware vessel with beer, three half-seers of rice, three joints turmeric, salt, tobacco, one bundle of leaves, bits of straw, one bundle firewood, one iron ladle, and one narrow-

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• 765 mouthed earthenware vessel. Thereupon they make the owner of the house where the death has occurred standing take in his hand the forequarter meat mentioned; the elderly men sit round with him in the middle; then how many countries we have from the beginning "grazed" on our wanderings, and what our ancestors of old have from time to time introduced of customs and rules, all these matters they recite, as at the chaṭiar. When they have finished reciting this, they continue reciting: One so and so headman discovered a rising ground with partridges; he said: Come along, I have discovered virgin ground, virgin forest, you will burn and clear jungle for yourselves, you will support yourselves, you will obtain a living. Hearing this we came together like decoy quails, like decoy doves, under the feet of so and so village headman, to support ourselves, to obtain a living. We saw the bait, the snare we did not see, to die here and to fall down there, this we did not know, honourable fathers. So as you see here, we have died, we have fallen down, honourable fathers. Then so and so village headman, honourable fathers, under his feet we have died, we have fallen down, honourable fathers. Then, as you see here, we called on you to come, we invited you, honourable fathers. As is seen here, you came, you arrived, crying with us, standing with us, honourable fathers. By this also we are satisfied, honourable fathers. Eye-water, tears, by this we are also satisfied, honourable fathers. Carrying out on the shoulders, leading out, by this also we are satisfied, honourable fathers. One branch of firewood, by this also we are satisfied, honourable fathers. Assisting to dig, assisting to hoe, by this also we are satisfied, honourable fathers. Then, as is seen here, our so and so village headman, honourable fathers, we called, we invited, you came, you arrived, you did not let us wait and become stale, honourable fathers. Then, honourable fathers, so and so village headman, as is seen here, to-day we have shaved them, have had their clothes washed, we have bathed, have washed our hair. As is seen here, our so and so village headman, honourable fathers, as is seen here, we had our head full of ashes, our mouth full of blood, honourable fathers, our shoulders were full of firewood, to-day, our so and so village headman, honourable fathers, you have made us white like the paddy-birds, we were like crows. You came walking on your legs, in connexion with courteous behaviour, in all we were deficient, high wooden slabs to sit on, a high verandah, in this respect we are also deficient, honourable fathers; one cup of water and one bowl of tobacco, in respect of this also we were deficient, honourable fathers, — in respect of all we were deficient; in respect of this you village people be especially grieved for us, viz., these friends where can they be settled, be kept, just now we wanted these things and those things, all they have brought into desuetude for us.

The village people then answer: The grieving ones have presumably gone in advance to Somas's narrow valley to prop up the hut, the booth on the fine sand. You rather say: These friends, where can they be settled, be kept; what is not sanctioned by custom they have sanctioned; what is not usage they have made so, a great many things they scraped

me clean of, fined me; these things ought not to be given; over this matter be especially grieved. Then he says in reply: The grieving ones, Father, have gone in advance to Somae's narrow valley to be crocodile-herds. 765

Now they bring the forequarter, the rice, the beer, the water, all out into the village street. This the village council men eat and drink. This they call kand kaṭhi daka[8]. The owner's people cook the liver and lungs and the head into a hash with rice. In the courtyard where they felled the animals, they sacrifice to the dead one. They make an invocation: Be greeted then, thou so and so, rotten food, rotten cooked rice is being given to thee, being handed to thee; with pleasure, with delight thou wilt receive it, accept it; mayest thou be pleased with, mayest thou agree to this. We also shall eat, put into our mouth; may stomach-ache, headache not be created, be formed, Lord, Father my Ṭhakur. In the same way they make invocations to all dead forefathers, so far as they are known, and sacrifice to them.

Thereupon they cut up the sacrificed animals to prepare curry. The sacrificed animals brought by relatives they cut into two equal parts; one part they cut off for the village people, and one part they put aside. When the rice and curry is ready, they all, small and big, eat. When they have had food, they lie down. The young men and girls do not dance at the final funeral ceremonies. When day dawns, they give the relatives a couple leaf-cups of beer and also food. When they have eaten this, they say goodbye to them. They take their forequarter with them. If co-parents-in-law have come to the final funeral ceremonies, they have besides the sacrificial animals brought with them two pots of beer, two sull[9] rice, two sull parched and flattened rice, salt and oil. When they say goodbye to these, the owners of the house at once kill a goat for them; only the forequarter and the head they keep. One sull rice, one sull flattened and parched rice, one pot beer, salt, and oil they also send with them. They see them off.

When the relatives have departed, they bring the village headman and his deputy and a couple of the village people together and give them the presented beer. The neck-part that they have kept, the barber gets; one seer rice, one seer parched and flattened rice, three branches of the root of turmeric, salt, tobacco, and one small earthenware vessel with beer they also present him with. Thereupon they speak to him: Look here, Father, you are the barber, for twelve years we had uncleanness, we were like consecrated he-goats with hair kept growing; this uncleanness thou hast taken down and made away with for us; in case you had been somewhere else, who knows how much thou might have got by working for wages, by gleaning; as is seen here, we have caused thee to lose time, we have not made thee satisfied with anything; for this mayest thou be especially grieved. He answers: The grieving ones are presumably gone in advance, Father, to Somae's narrow

[8] See Dictionary s. v. [9] The sull is a measure of 20 half-seers.

[14] Cole Ein Mus. — Bedding.

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765 valley. He then takes what he has got with him to his home, and the village headman and his deputy and those with them also go.

When a person dies, the people of this house do not perform any sacrifice, until the final funeral ceremonies for the dead have been gone through; neither do they use sindur on themselves; they do not libate beer, nor do they have any marriage.

People say, it is reported: At the final funeral ceremonies they give the dead ones all, cows, goats, pigs, fowls, all these they make wander along, and in the other world they look after what is theirs.

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764 787 illustrate the point well. Thus the man who sets fire to the deceased, asks *Maraṅ Buru* in trance. The village elders, "*Mònṛèn hòṛ*," also join in the question. "Are you well ?" *Maraṅ Buru* answers, "I am all right." Then they again ask the dead man, "You were not much aged. Why did you die so early ? Did any *dan* (witch) eat you up ? Did you die through natural causes ?" The dead man answers (through *Maraṅ Buru*), "This was the span of my life, so I died." Next they ask again, "Have you hoarded wealth anywhere under the earth ?" The dead man answers (through *Maraṅ Buru*), "Yes" (or no). If the answer be in the affirmative, directions are given by the man in trance as to where the money lies buried. The men assembled, thereupon, will dig up the earth to find the hoarded wealth. Lastly, it may be that the dead man (through *Maraṅ Buru*) may ask those present to bring his children. They are then brought and kissed by him. He may also request those present to look after the children well.

765 783 *Telnahan or chotokaman (Preliminary purification)*

The Santal observes ceremonial pollution for a period till he is in a position to procure the requisites of purification. This affects the particular clan (614) to which the deceased belonged. Thus we gathered at Mayurbhanj that when a Nij Hansdak' dies, all

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persons belonging to the same totem are affected, and they desist from eating fish, meat and oil, nor do they borrow fire from another man's house for nine days, till the *asidha* (ceremonial pollution) continues.

On the expiry of the period, the Headman arrives at the house in mourning with the village elders and the other invited relatives. A Santal barber then shaves the members of the family, whereupon, they bathe after rubbing their bodies with oil and oil-cake. Now, a ceremony follows when three tooth-sticks, four fingers in length, oil, oil-cake, *narkan hasa* (a kind of earth to wash the hair) are arranged on three *Sal*-leaves and offered to *Maraṅ Buru* (the chief presiding deity), the deceased and the dead ancestors, with prayers so that *Maraṅ Buru* may admit the released spirit after purifying it with all these materials.

Now, all men have a ceremonial bath closely followed by the women. A *Tika Murmu* now addresses the gathering, "They were so long under *asbida*. Now they are purified. We can now take them back." Now all shout *hòribol* as a sign of approval. Two men now again fall into a trance (*jhupar*) and impersonate *Maraṅ Buru* and the dead man. They are liberally plied with a supply of rice-beer, along with the "Mòṛèn hòṛ" (village elders). At night, fowls are offered by the tribe

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765 (*Simkutam*) and the inmates of the house worship
783 them (*Marañ Burn* and the deceased) with a hotch-
[782] potch, called *Giritora*. The ceremonies now conclude with a tribal feast and drink.

769 Thereafter, some rice and vegetables are kept on leaf-plates and later, deposited in a basket along with a water-pot, as a meal spread for the spirit of the deceased. Next, it is hung from a rafter of the deceased's house. The following morning, the basket is closely inspected ; and, if any food-particles can be seen, it is believed that the deceased has eaten the food and has washed his hands with the water in the pot.

765 *Iiling Dabar* (*going to the river Damodar with the bones*)

Now the day arrives for carrying the bones of the dead to be consigned to the holy waters of Damodar. The elders with the Headman begin to pour in the deceased person's house. Some prepare
[787] sacks for carrying food-stuff and the bone, while two others fall in a trance (*jhupar*) impersonating again the dead man and *Marañ Burn*, when their wishes are consulted as to the person who will carry the bones. On the reply of the person impersonating the deceased, the man is shown his luggage.
[782] Now three fowls are sacrificed in honour of *Marañ*
[769] *Burn*, the ancestor-spirits and the dead man, the

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heart being reserved for the Chief Presiding Deity (*Marañ Buru*) and the remnants of the sun-dried rice that accompanied the offerings, are carefully preserved to be carried along to Damodar.

Next, the bones previously buried are carried to the cross-road, washed with water and *hàṇḍia ràsi* (the best part of rice-beer), being rubbed within the folds of a yellow-coloured cloth. The women offer presents of money to the bone, and it is placed inside the sack prepared for the purpose. The empty pot (which contained the bone so long), is now placed on three twigs of *Kendu* tree (called so in Oriya) while the carrier walks round it thrice and then facing east breaks it amidst cries of *Hòribol* by the village-elders. Thereafter, he leaves for his destination being escorted by two men to the *Gadi* (halting place for men going towards Damodar).

Bhandan or Final Purification

After the *jañ baba* (the bones of the dead) are deposited in the Damodar river, offerings like the *Pindòs* of the Hindus are prepared with mud, tooth-picks, parched rice and sweet-meats on three *sal*-leaves on an altar, when *Marañ Buru*, the dead ancestors and the deceased are propitiated.

Now, on the day for *Bhandan*, the relatives and the friends of the family in mourning arrive at the house of the deceased together with the village-

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783 elders. The men-folk are shaved and, thereafter,
765 both men and women repair to the *jòl-ghat* (public bath). Coming back, two men again impersonate
[782] *Marañ Burn* and the deceased, and are offered
[769] *bàṇḍia ràsi* (the best part of rice-beer); fowls and goats are sacrificed in their honour in the yard. A meal is prepared with rice and offered inside the house, while the villagers are plied with rice-beer and treated to a feast. The meat of the sacrificed animal is divided in a peculiar way, the villagers being entitled to the upper side when it was felled on the ground, the lower falling to the share of him who provided it.

The ceremonies conclude at Mayurbhanj with *Kandh Bhojani*, when some Santals, impersonating Brahmins and Vaishnavs, are fed by the family, and *Bhandar Bodh*, which requires a barber, similarly acting his part, to be presented with rice and meat showing undoubted influences of Hinduism.

IDEAS OF HEAVEN AND HELL

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792 At this stage, we think it will be instructive to give the reader some idea about the Santal's belief in a life hereafter.

The Heaven (*Serma disom*, lit. sky-country) is situated up in the blue skies. It is also called
[776] *Svòṛòg*. There the gods, *Marañ Burn* (the Chief Presiding Deity) and others live. At times they also

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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764 distance and watch the body being consumed. The pot in which the bit of the collar-bone is kept, is then buried outside the village. Then they shave and bathe and before they enter the village smear themselves with sal resin The men who carried the dead man and also those who accompanied the dead to the cremation ground drink handi bought with the money realised from the dead man's articles. Coming back after cremating the body they hang a pot of leaves in the room where the man had breathed his last. In a cup they put some boiled rice and above the rice they place another pot containing fried fish. If the next morning some boiled rice can be [795] seen on the fish then they think the spirit of the departed came and partook of a portion of the rice. But if no rice can be seen then they think that the spirit did not come. In this case they believe that something of the departed is left with them, that is why the spirit did not come.

765 After five days there is a ceremony called Tel nahan. All the villagers assemble at the dead man's house and shave. Then they go and bathe, the men in one place, the women in another. The men take with them a little earth (used as soap), oilcake, oil, three sal twigs (used as tooth-brushes) and a couple of leaves. The villagers put these at the edge of the water on three separate leaves, and offer all with the left hand first to the dead, then to Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Burhi (first man and woman). The last two are invoked to take the dead man under their care. The Santals keep a little bone to throw in the water of the Damodar river. There is no fixed time for taking the bones to that river. It is the custom of the Santals to wait

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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765 • until a sufficient number of their relatives have died. Along the river there are several ghats where the relative who has brought the bones offers earth and tooth-brushes to the departed and to Pilchu Haram and Burhi after throwing the bones, etc., into the river. He goes into deep water and facing East dives and while under the water he lets the bones go. The last function is known as Chandan. On the floor of the room where the man breathed his last the eldest son puts a quantity of adwa rice on a plate of Sal-leaves. Then a he-goat is cut by holding the neck over this rice and the blood which falls is mixed with the rice properly. All the members of the house take a little of it taking the name of the departed. Then a great feast is given by the sons of the departed in which all the relatives and villagers join. When this is over the mourners resume their ordinary life, but till then they can neither sacrifice nor use vermilion, nor can marriage or any other ceremony take place in the village.

766 When a little child or a pregnant woman dies the Santals bury the corpse. After the death the female relatives and villagers, taking a little mustard oil and turmeric (powdered), rub it on dead body covering it with a new cloth, all utensils and other objects of the departed being carried to the burial ground. When they reach the destination they place the bedstead in such a way that the head of the dead body points towards the South. A branch of the Mowah tree is put on the bed near the head. The pit is made North to South. All those who accompany the dead do not forget to take a pot with water from the house of the departed and a rupee. They then, taking a little water from the

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764 properly until the corpse has been thoroughly consumed. When it is over the onlookers begin to search among the embers for the *jaṅbaha*, literally the "bone-flower". I have never met a Santal who has been able to explain the meaning of the term. Three pieces of bone are collected, two from the skull and one piece of the collar bone. The turmeric paste and the sun-dried rice flour are mixed together and used to clean the bones; the small earthen pot in which the turmeric was carried is cleaned in the fire, and when it is dry the inside is again cleaned with some of the paste, after which the bones are put into it. The mouth of the pot is then stopped up with a fragment of earthenware and is sealed with some of the same paste; a small hole, however, is left in the centre of the lid "to enable the dead one to breathe". The remains of the fire are put out with great care. One of the men brings water from nearby, using the water pot brought from the house for this purpose; others sprinkle water and one man scatters the ashes with the winnowing fan. If the [787] fire should rekindle it is thought to be a great misfortune. Men would have to be collected to put it out once more and the bereaved family would be made to pay a fine to the rest of the village. When the fire is out the ashes are brought together in a small space and the rest of the site is cleaned with a plaster of cowdung and water. The parched rice is then sprinkled over the cleaned space, and this is known as "sowing" the rice, the same term being used as for the similar procedure during the marriage ceremony. Finally, the corpse bearers and the one who saw to the fire have to cross the ashes from south to north. The remaining ashes are covered over with the winnowing fan, and each of them in turn then leaps over with his left hand lightly resting on the fan as he does so. The party then leave the cremation ground and the pot containing the bones is buried at the base of a tree.

The members of the funeral party then bathe, after which they return to the end of the village street, where they light a small fire, using the straw from the roof of the house. They burn the cotton seeds together with some resin and oil cake, and holding their hands into the thick smoke they rub it all over themselves. On completing this operation they collect once more at the bereaved home to comfort the family and to drink [814] beer. On this occasion no one who belongs to the same clan as [273] the dead person and his family may partake of the beer.

765 The next phase in the ceremonies is known as *tel nahan*, or "oil washing", and alternatively it is spoken of as *unut ader*, or

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"bringing in the shadow". If the people of the house are very poor a modified form of this ceremony can take place on the evening of the cremation; in any event, the particular day seems to be dictated by considerations of convenience, and it takes place also on the third and on the fifth day after death. All the villagers gather in the courtyard, where the senior member of the family kills a young hen by dashing its head against the lintel of the door into the house. One of its wings and one leg are tied to a stick and the remainder of the flesh is cooked. One portion of the cooked food is taken out to a cross-roads at the end of the village street, where a small thatched-roof "house" is constructed. The food is placed under this roof, the "house" is circumambulated three times in the same way as the funeral pyre and is then set on fire. A second portion is deposited in a basket, which in turn is placed in a rope sling and suspended from a rafter over the spot on the veranda, or it may be in the house, where the dead person expired. The remainder of the food is set on a plate made from *karam* leaves instead of on the usual leaf plate made from *sarjom*, and it has to be eaten by the chief mourner, the one who applied fire to the mouth of the corpse. He takes only a few mouthfuls, raising the food to his mouth with his left hand, this being the only occasion when a man uses his left hand for eating. The food that he leaves is taken to the cross-roads at the end of the village street and thrown away together with the implements in which it was cooked. When the people who took it are returning to the house they pass by an *ukhur*, or mortar, in which water has been left for the purpose, and each person dips the big toe of his left foot in the water as he walks past. They are accompanied by the chief mourner, who on his return to the courtyard takes the leg and the wing of the hen that were tied to a stick and throws them over the house. At this stage also, in some cases, the vessel containing the bones is dug up and brought to the house, where it is slung from a rafter: though in other cases it seems that the bones are left outside the village to await the time of their final disposal. Memorial stones are not set up at this or any other time.

When the food has been served to the chief mourner and to the spirit of the dead person, the rest of the villagers are feasted. If possible, the meal consists of a goat meat curry with rice, and there is a plentiful supply of rice beer. Before the villagers eat, one of the young men is possessed by the spirit of the dead and another is possessed by *Marak Buru*. These two sit side by side on the ground holding in their hands a new winnowing fan in

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765 787 which grains of rice are placed. These grains are both whole and broken and separate out when they are shaken up. The possessed youths utter the guttural-sounding grunts which are typical of persons in their condition, shake their heads from one side to another and jerk the winnowing fans up and down. When the spirits are fully in control they are addressed by one of the relatives. He calls on the name of the deceased and says: "Now, *Gôsâi*, we have given you this rice, speak well to us. Tell us, how did you die and how did you fall? Did you leave us at your own wish, or was it through some disease or through someone's enmity?" On the answer to this question will depend in most cases the subsequent proceedings of the mourners. Questions are asked until the mourners are satisfied that there is no more information to be gained. The spirit of the dead man is cautious in making accusations, and imputations of witchcraft or spirit activity in causing death are usually couched in general terms, for his relations will have recourse to the *ojha* and the *jan* for confirmation if they deem it necessary to do so. At the end of the conversation the spirits go from one to another of the assembled company, and addressing them by name they ask for a drink of water. In return they are supplied with beer to drink, after which they return to normal consciousness. Next, the animal for 765 769 782 the feast is offered to the spirit of the departed. A sacrificial square is marked out with flour in the courtyard and in it the animal is fed on sun-dried rice. Vermilion is applied to it in the usual manner of sacrifices, but the animal is slain with a blow on the back of its head. This animal is provided by the bereaved household, but in addition each of the houses in the village provides a hen to contribute to the feast. The invocation with the offering is as follows: "Take this, *Gôsâi*; we are giving this to you in order that you may be freed from *Jom Raj Haḍur Raj*,[1] from the house of the *Suṇḍi* and the *Haḍi*." The *Haḍi* are the Hari caste, outcasts who tend the cremation grounds of the Hindus, and it may be that the *Suṇḍi*, who are now the sellers of drugs and liquor, have also been associated with the disposal of 765 264 the dead. When all the food is ready for the feast it is divided into three portions. One of these is for the people of the village, one for the bereaved household and one for their relatives, who have gathered whether they belong to the same village or have come from a distance for the occasion. As the food is being served to each person, the server tells him: "This piece is from the wing" or "This piece is from the leg"; all the meat is cut into small

[1] *Haḍur Raj*, another name for the king of the underworld.

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pieces to make for convenience in eating with the fingers, and it is a point of etiquette to serve each guest with a variety of delicacies from different parts of the bird or animal being eaten, but the flesh from the head is reserved for the chief mourner and his kinsfolk.

With this ceremony one part of the final rites has been completed. The villagers who assisted at the cremation have been safeguarded against the dangers that are inherent in handling the corpse of a dead person and the village is again clean. The mourners have received much comfort from the display of village solidarity and from the sympathy of their kinsfolk and they are free once more to resume their daily work. They have also re-established contact of a kind with the spirit of the departed and so satisfied one of the most persistent longings of the human heart. He has spoken with them and explained from his present knowledge the reason for his death. The presence of the bones within the house or at least at the base of a tree just beyond the village acts as a continual reminder of his nearness to them. So far as the funeral rites are designed to compensate the living for their loss, all that can be done has now been done, but something still remains to be done before the departed spirit will be at rest. The bones have to be taken away to the river, where they will be floated away on the tide. The river in question is the Damodar,[1] which is known to them by the name *Nāī*, or River (all other rivers are called *gaḍa*); it lies from eighty to one hundred miles away from the farther villages—a considerable journey. The time for undertaking this expedition is dictated by the claims of work and other social obligations, and it usually happens that a party from a group of neighbouring villages set out together in the short period of comparative leisure which follows the transplanting of rice during the rains. An animal is set aside at home to be used at the final feast that will take place on the return of the travellers. Before they leave home an ear of the animal is pierced and the blood which falls is mixed with some sun-dried rice that is placed in the earthen pot with the bones. The ceremony at the river is carried out at one of several traditional cremation grounds that abound on its banks. These are Hindu sites, and the attendants, who are usually of the *Hāḍi* and *Dom* castes, receive a fee from the Santals—a cloth and some money. The ceremonial reminds one of the procedure followed at the "water marriage" celebrations by the village tank. The site has to be bought, and upon it cowrie shells are placed in a circle

[1] See Chapter 3, p. 28.

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765 within which three vermilion spots are made. The one who floats away the bones should be the one who placed fire to the mouth of the corpse at the burning. He changes his clothes and walks forward until he is quite covered by deep water. He then faces towards the east and releases the bones into the current together with the blood-besprinkled grains of rice. When he comes out of the water a further offering is made of earth from the river bank. This is placed on leaves and floated away with an invocation to the ancestors asking them to receive the spirit of the dead person. This done, the members of the party take a meal by the river bank, eating flattened rice and cakes that they have brought with them. They leave some of the food for the attendants and set out on their homeward way.

Babulal gave an account of the return of the Barikul party on August 18, 1939. He records that it was a hot day and the maize in the homestead fields was fast ripening. "Very early today those who had gone to the river returned to the village. We could hear them cry out '*Horibol, Horibol*'. When they arrived, the *mañjhi* and the *godet*' called everyone together and we washed the feet of the travellers. One person from each house [731] went to wash their feet, and in return they received a gift of sweetmeats from a parcel that the travellers had brought home with them. When the washing was finished each one went to his own house to drink beer, and then the mothers asked their sons: 'O my boy, at which place did you float away your father?' They replied saying: 'At the *Tel kupi* and *Tirio ghats*.' So all the people asked for news of their dead kinsfolk and took a meal, and then in the afternoon they went about their work." *Ghat* is the Bengali word for a landing place on the side of a river, and Babulal names in his account two of the places to which the Santals of the area go. *Tel kupi* is a small earthenware pot used for carrying oil, and *tirio* we have met before, as it means a flute, but I have not obtained any explanation of the names. The former name is a hybrid expression, for *tel* is a Bengali word, while *kupi* is Santali; the ordinary Santali word for oil is *sunum*.

765 The final feast takes place after the return from the river. It is known as *bhaṇḍan* and is in accordance with the means of the family concerned. When the guests have come together, three of the young men are possessed by the spirits of the dead person, the founder of the village and *Marak Buru* respectively. On this occasion the spirits are asked if they are satisfied with all that [769] has been done, and they are expected to give their assent. The [782] animal set aside for the *bhaṇḍan* is offered to the spirit of the

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dead person, and when it is slain the side on which the animal falls is retained by the giver, while the upturned side is retained by the villagers. The expression used for the side on which the animal falls is *gur lotom*, and this term is also used for any animal that has been reserved for a forthcoming festival and then could not be used because of a death in the family during the interval. When the feast has been prepared, the guests are called to sit down by the host, who calls out three times: "Come along, all. It is time for the *bhat* and *bostom* to eat the rice." *Bhat* and *bostom* are the names of two beggar castes.[1] After all have eaten, a conversation takes place between the villagers on the following lines. A spokesman of the villagers speaks to the assembled company: "In virgin soil and uncut forest, O fathers, such and such a headman cut the trees and made a level plain where he put up huts to dwell in, O fathers. Things went well with them, O fathers, their numbers increased, they gathered together like a flock of doves, O fathers. Now in this house there has been a death and the people in it have been cleansed from defilement, O fathers." Next he addresses the headman: "O father headman, allow us to go to our homes, for all things have been completed." The headman replies: "Fathers, you may go. Go to Sikar[2] and bring from there Modon the washerman and Kisto the barber." The villagers ask the headman: "And what will they get from us?" To which he replies: "They ought to get from you a basket of rice and an uncastrated goat." Then the villagers ask to be excused: "O father, Sikar is a long way off and who is able to go? Let us be our own washerman and our own barber. Let it be said that from today all the work is finished for this world and the next." When they have been excused, those who carried the corpse to the burning ground have their say: "O fathers, O five, we gave and burnt some wood", whereupon they are given small pieces of burnt wood in exchange. Similarly, they speak of the spade which was used, in return for which they receive some meat. They tell how their eyebrows were singed in the fire and for this receive some beer in a new pot. They take these things away from the house to consume later.

So end the death ceremonies. Most of the living are thereby freed from their obligations to the dead one and also from the dangers to which this period in their lives has exposed them. As far as they could, the rites have ensured the future happiness of

[1] *Bostom* is a form of *Vaishnava*. Cf. reference in the *Karam* festival myth in Chapter 9, p. 118.

[2] A country in which the ancestors once dwelt, according to tradition.

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765 769 the departed spirit who has now taken his place with the ancestors. His son remains under an obligation to name him at the time of the family sacrifices, and his widow owes to him and to herself certain marks of her widowhood. She wears no flowers or vermilion in her hair and she leaves off the iron bangle given her in marriage. Now, however, the family is free to resume normal relations with the world of men and of spirits, for once again they can marry and give in marriage.

761 Death is essentially an interruption of the normal processes of living. In the conditions under which the Santals live it is often sudden in its onslaught; it descends upon a house unexpectedly and usually as a cruel visitant, for the number of those who live to enjoy a peaceful old age is small. It is never due to accident, for this is a concept beyond the range of Santal philosophy, and the living take pains to discover the cause of every death that occurs, for their own protection. Unless steps are taken to prevent a recurrence it is common belief that at least three deaths will take place in quick succession. But it remains wrapped in mystery. In one of the folk-tales it is told how a woman craved a [538] boon from a holy man: "Give me this boon, to know where the *jivi* goes when we die and by what road does it depart, through the mouth or through the nose, and having departed where does it go? Give me to see what happens. Tell me also when I shall die and when I have died where will my *jivi* go?" Man is com- 775 pounded of two different substances, *horṇo*, or body, and *jivi*, or 828 soul; these are sometimes separated in dreams, and the final [774] separation in death is a fact that none can deny, but what [539] happens then? Death figures in many sayings that express the sense of the unknown. "In this life", runs one saying, "there is eating and drinking and the wearing of clothes. In the next life who knows what there is?" Some will tell that on death the soul [538] of man enters into a large lizard, the *ghinni*.[1] One story that has a wide currency tells of two men who lay down to rest at the foot of a tree. One of them fell asleep and the other was amazed to see a large lizard coming out of the mouth of his sleeping companion. When the latter awoke he said that in his dream he had been led to a place where treasure lay buried. Yet another common saying expresses scepticism concerning this belief. "Whether after death I shall become a common lizard, *kakṛa*, or a large lizard, I know not." This saying is used to give expression to the ancient materialist principle of behaviour: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die."

[1] Probably *Tiligua rubriventris*.